



Hayride by kingstoken

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Characters: Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers

Relationships: Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

When he finally got away, and rode the wagon out to farmer Johnson's back forty, the last thing he expected to see was Joyce, by herself, sitting on the ground and shivering.

Hayride

Author's Note:

Created for the [Jopper Autumn Challenge](#), prompt "hayride". ([Moodboard](#))

Also, I don't remember if haunted corn mazes were a thing back in the eighties, but for the purposes of this story they were.

"What the hell, Joyce?" said Jim as he jumped down from the hay wagon. He was late, he had planned for El and him to join the Byers at the annual hayride, but he had gotten called in and had to send El ahead with Joyce and her sons. When he finally got away, and rode the wagon out to farmer Johnson's back forty, the last thing he expected to see was Joyce, by herself, sitting on the ground and shivering.

"Hey" he said crouching down in front of her "where's your coat?"

"I gave it to Will. He had only brought a light weight jacket, and he was feeling cold."

"Uh huh, and where is Will now?"

"They met up with Dustin and Lucas, and they all went into the haunted corn maze" she said, indicating the cluster of corn stalks behind her "Don't worry, Jonathan, Nancy and Steve are with them."

"And, you didn't want to join them?"

"No, I think I've seen enough scary things for a long time."

"Can't say I fault you for that." It was getting late, the sun was going down and darkness was rapidly descending, not that it would effect this event, if he remembered from past years it always went late into the night, with the building of a huge bonfire, not that Joyce would last that long.

"Come on" he said, helping her to her feet "lets get you on the wagon."

"But ..." she said, glancing back at the maze.

"Don't worry, the wagon just circles the farm. During the next pass or two we'll find the kids waiting. Besides, sitting on straw has to be better for you than sitting on the cold hard ground." They climbed up into the wagon, and after they were seated, the tractor began its slow ramble around the property. Jim shrugged out of his coat and placed it around her shoulders.

"Hop, no. You need your coat" she said, as she returned it to him. "I'm fine, I'm doing better already." She didn't look better, in fact, he thought her lips might be turning blue.

"How about this, we share it" he said, as he put the coat back on, and then opened it in invitation. Joyce hesitated for just a moment, then snuggled in close to his side, he wrapped the coat around them the best he could, the sides didn't meet, but he could feel it was already warmer. They didn't talk, in the beginning Joyce would shiver or occasionally mumble something, but after awhile he felt her completely relax against him. Once they'd passed the corn maze for the second time, he realized she had fallen asleep. For a moment he panicked, until he caressed her cheek and found it warm to the touch, her breathing was even and she was sleeping normally, she hadn't passed out. On their third approach to corn maze Jim saw the kids.

"Joyce" he whispered in her ear.

"Hmm."

"Joyce, the kids are back." Her eyes fluttered open, she looked up at him, they gazed at each other, almost as if they were held there, the moment seemed to stretch, until it was broken by the clatter of feet climbing into the wagon. Everyone was talking at once, none of them seemed to notice how the adults were arranged, except Jonathan.

"Hey, Mom, you can have my jacket if you need it."

"That's alright honey" she said, then looked back up at Hop "I'm fine right where I am."

